



## **Movement for mental health**

### **fact sheet for parents and carers**

#### **Why should children move more for mental health?**

1. they will have less tension, stress and mental fatigue
2. they will feel more energised after a natural energy boost
3. they will feel a sense of achievement
4. they will gain more focus and motivation in all areas
5. they may feel less cross or frustrated
6. movement will build a healthy appetite
7. they will be having fun and boosting endorphins

#### **How schools can encourage movement:**

- implement 'The Daily Mile' from Nursery - Y6 and encourage the children to run, jog or walk a mile a day during the school day
- have mini movement breaks within the classroom behind their desks (calf raises, shoulder rolls, torso twists, knee lifts, bounce/jump)
- breathing exercises (four counts In, 8 counts Out, humming bee breath, mountain breathing)
- get outside and walk or run in nature, then pause breathe and ask them to mindfully notice what they can feel, see, smell, hear
- create a 'scavenger' hunt with clues that encourage running around your school grounds. You could link the hunt to a theme that is being taught in class, or to maths or science questions so that they are being challenged mentally and physically
- practise some basic yoga moves to help strengthen body and calm the mind
- go on a bug or tree hunt, giving specific things to find and work as a team to tick off the list the quickest
- make art in nature - create pieces of art made from the local environment encouraging movement, creativity and curiosity
- encourage children to play hopscotch and french skipping during breaktimes
- have the children follow fun instructions to create movement breaks in assembly or lesson time in order to reduce the risk of cognitive overload e.g everyone with a birthday in August jump up/sit down; anyone with a name beginning with G jump up/turn around/sit down
- play a game of duck, duck, goose in the school hall or playground
- create an outdoor learning environment and make your own version of a 'Forest School'. Include activities such as making a mini pond, a lego bird feeding table, or a bug hotel
- create a waterproof den and link this to the science theme of materials, allowing children to discover which materials make the best waterproof home for them
- draw a giant grid with chalk on the playground and play battleships linking the game to the maths theme of coordinates
- have a skipping competition, who can skip for 30 seconds/ who can do 100 skips?

- Create fun circuits for the children to follow including balancing, jumping, squatting, lifting and hanging

### **Available support**

#### **Mental Health Awareness Week May 2024**

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk>

#### **The Daily Mile**

<https://thedailymile.co.uk/>

#### **Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition**

<https://cypmhc.org.uk/>

#### **PE with Joe**

The Body Coach TV by Joe Wicks